

LETTER  
OF  
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

COMMUNICATING,

*In compliance with a resolution of the Senate of December 9, 1869, information in relation to the present condition of the United States branch mint at New Orleans, Louisiana.*

JANUARY 13, 1870.—Referred to the Committee on Finance and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
January 12, 1870.

SIR: In response to the following resolution of the Senate of the United States, passed December 9, 1869, to wit—

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to report to the Senate the present condition of the United States branch mint and grounds in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana; the purposes for which the same are now used; also, whether, in his opinion, the interests of the government require a mint in that city—

I have the honor to transmit herewith a communication from A. B. Mullett, Esq., supervising architect, which contains the desired information, as far as the same can be furnished from the records of this department.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, &c.,

GEO. S. BOUTWELL,  
Secretary.

Hon. SCHUYLER COLFAX,

*Vice-President of the United States and President of the Senate.*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
Office of Supervising Architect, January 8, 1870.

SIR: In accordance with your instructions I have the honor to submit the following report on the condition of the United States branch mint and grounds in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Under a resolution of the city council of the city of New Orleans, approved May 11, 1835, the mayor of that city, under date June 19, 1835, did execute with Martin Gordon, Esq., a duly authorized commissioner of the United States, a notarial act conveying to the United States the use and occupation of the square of ground inclosed and known as "Jackson Square," situated in said city and bounded as follows, viz: by Esplanade street, Barracks street, Levee street, and the public road, for the express and only purpose of erecting thereon a branch of the United States Mint, together with the necessary appendages.

It is provided in the above mentioned act, "that should it hereafter be deemed necessary by the government of the United States to remove the mint contemplated to be established as aforesaid, or to cease to occupy it for such purposes, then the said act shall be null and void."

The plans were prepared in 1835, and the work of erection commenced in that year and continued to 1848, when the building was declared completed, at a cost of \$327,548 55.

In 1853 it was found that, owing to the nature of the land upon which the building is situated, the walls settled so much—some of them having an outward inclination—that it was considered dangerous to occupy the building. To remedy these defects it was found necessary to take down those walls; and other repairs being rendered necessary, from imperfect workmanship and the natural decay of materials, it was deemed advisable to make the building fire-proof. Appropriations for these objects having been made by Congress, the work of repair commenced in 1855 and continued to September 30, 1858, when the repairs were reported to "have been completed, and the operations of the mint are now pursued without hindrance, and with increased conveniences and security, as the building is strictly fire-proof," at a cost, from the commencement of the work, of \$588,812 70. Additional repairs, at an aggregate cost of \$26,013 10, were made from time to time, the last during 1866-'67. The building is now in a reasonably good condition, and it is estimated that, at a cost of \$10,000, it could be again put in working order.

The building, though large, is not, in the proper sense of the word, a large mint, the greater portion of the building being devoted to residences for the superintendent, the melter and refiner, the assayer, and the coiner. The mint is not at present in operation, but is partially occupied by the superintendent of light-houses for that coast, and by the office of the assistant treasurer. Accommodations could readily be provided for these officers in the custom-house building.

Very respectfully,

A. B. MULLETT,  
*Supervising Architect.*

Hon. GEORGE S. BOUTWELL,  
*Secretary of the Treasury.*